IT WAS ONLY THE FIRST HALF OF THE GAME...
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MATCH A PLAYER FROM THE OPPOSING TEAM COLLIDED INTO ME EXTRA HARD, TWISTING MY KNEE AT AN AWKWARD ANGLE... AND THEN I REALIZED I HAD TORN A LIGAMENT IN MY KNEE.
IT HURT LIKE HELL...
SO OF COURSE COACH DIDN'T PUT ME BACK IN FOR THE REST OF THE GAME...
BUT THE GAME WASN'T OVER YET...
I WAS INJURED BUT THE GAME WAS STILL GOING ON...
I WAS SITTING THERE, SQUEEZING MY LEGS, PRAYING FOR THE TEAM WHILE WATCHING CLOSELY...
I'M SORRY...! I SAID WE'D WIN... I SAID I'D PLAY MY BEST...
I BLABBED MY MOUTH IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT
BUT TRULY BELIEVING WE WOULD, WE GOT ALL THE WAY HERE... AND NOW...
ONE MONTH AFTER THE GAME, I FINALLY RECEIVED THE SURGERY I SO BADLY NEEDED...
Koi Inu
Chapter 44: If Even Dogs Can Walk...
.....

SHUN!
YO
CAME TO SEE ME?
SO ...
HOW ARE YOU?
ABOUT AS BAD AS IT LOOKS.
LOOK AT ME IN THIS SORRY STATE, HA.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO MOVE.
IT HURTS, RIGHT?
YEAH IT HURTS... BUT
WHEN I SAY IT HURTS, I'M ACTUALLY SORRY THEY STUCK UP MY BUTT THAT'S CAUSING THE PAIN, AND DON'T SAY ANYTHING TO ANYONE!
IT'S EMBARRASSING.
COUGH
COUGH
YOU ABSOLUTELY CANNOT SAY ANYTHING.
THAT'S WHAT'S EMBARRASSING YOU!

...
WELL, YOU HELD WHAT YOU SOW.
LOOKS LIKE I TORE THE MENISCUS IN MY KNEE WAY BACK WHEN I HIT IT ON THAT POLE.
I DIDN'T NOTICE, AND EVENTUALLY THINGS GOT WORSE AND WORSE.
BUT I WAS FINE. OR SO I THOUGHT. I DIDN'T EXPECT THAT TO HAPPEN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GAME...
I'M SORRY GUYS...
TO HAVE LET THIS HAPPEN.
AND WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
EH?
"THE TEAM COULDN'T WIN WITHOUT ME"
IS WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, RIGHT?
YOU-
-SUKE
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT! IF YOU HAD ME PLAYING WE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN FARTHER.

I ALMOST GOT ANGRY ...

EVEN WHEN YOU WERE INJURED ?

YEAH ...!

THAT'S RIGHT!

YOU ...

YOU'RE ALWAYS, ALWAYS ...

TALKING IN THAT WAY OF YOURS, ACTING LIKE THE REST OF US DIDN'T MATTER!

THE ONE IN PAIN WASN'T JUST ME I THOUGHT I KNEW HOW EVERYONE FELT WHEN REALLY I DIDN'T.

OW

YOU SERIOUSLY PISS ME OFF!

OY! WHAT IS THIS!

WE'RE SORRY! WE'LL CLEAN!

BRI... BUT

WE CAME TO SEE HOW YOU WERE DOING!

SHUN!

I'M SORRY! I'LL COME AGAIN LATER!

THOSE... ARE THE PRINTOUTS FROM CLASS!

.....

.....

ヤンヌ

SOON HE KNEW HOW TO READ

...YUP. IN THE END, WE DIDN'T EVEN MAKE IT TO THE BEST OF 8 AND EVERYTHING WAS OVER ALREADY...

I INTENDED FOR YOUSUKE TO KEEP THE TEAM GOING IN MY PLACE, BUT IT WAS A HUGE FAILURE...

WHEN I THINK BACK, I HAD SO MANY REGRETS THAT EVEN LIVING WAS HARD...

ガァァァ

WHEN I WAS RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL, EVERYONE... WAS STUDYING FOR THEIR COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS...

BUT FOR ME, IT FELT LIKE NO TIME HAD PASSED SINCE THAT SUMMER MATCH ...

NO-ONE-DARED-TO-BERATE ME IN MY INJURED STATE... I FELT UNCOMFORTABLE AT SCHOOL...

I'D TALKED BIG IN THE DAYS LEADING UP TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP.

THERE WAS NO WAY I COULD FACE PEOPLE AFTER THAT...

SHUN!

WAIT!

LET ME GET YOU A TOWEL.

YOU SAID WE'D CALL EACH OTHER AND KEEP IN TOUCH AFTER SCHOOL ENDED, RIGHT?

.....

MOM...

I LOST THE COLLEGE OFFER.

.....

I WAS ALWAYS

PRACTICING FOR BASKETBALL, SO I WAS AWFUL AT STUDYING...

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO EITHER.

SORRY... ALL THIS MOPING IS MAKING ME THINK ABOUT WHEN WE WERE KIDS.

MY CHILDHOOD JUST SEEMS LIKE A DREAM OF THE PAST NOW...

THE STUFF THAT HAPPENED WITH YOU

AND THAT ERASER ...
SO?... PATHETIC AREN'T I?
I'M NOT GOOD AT ANYTHING ...
THAT'S WHY
I THOUGHT, OF COURSE YOU'D TURN OUT HATING ME AND THAT I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT...
WHEN WE RAN INTO EACH OTHER ...
YOU WERE MAKING THE SAME FACE BACK THEN.
I... I DIDN'T KNOW AT THE TIME...
ABOUT THE MISUNDERSTANDING AND YOUR BASKETBALL STUFF... WHAT HAPPENED WHEN WE WERE APART... AND ABOUT YOU... I KNEW NOTHING...
Y'KNOW WHAT...
I THINK I SAID THIS BEFORE, BUT
I REALLY DON'T HATE YOU AT ALL.
WE'RE CHILDHOOD FRIENDS AFTER ALL.

CHIYO
THANK YOU
DON'T WANDER OFF TOO CLOSE TO THE EDGE!
IT'S DANGEROUS!
I KNOW!
I'M FINE!
ER, IT'S NOT FINE AT ALL...
...
ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS...
I WONDER WHAT THEY'RE DOING NOW?
YOU-SUKE?
MHM
DID HE CONFESS TO THAT GIRL NAMED INOUE?

YOUSUKE... DID PROPERLY CONFESS BUT ...
IT DIDN'T END WELL.
HE'S A GOOD GUY AND ALL BUT...

NOW HE'S STILL PLAYING BASKETBALL AT NIIGATA UNIVERSITY ...
OH, I SEE.

YOU HAD GOOD FRIENDS.
THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY REGRETS...

AND ALSO

IF YOU NEVER HAD THAT ACCIDENT
WE WOULDN'T HAVE MET AGAIN, REMEMBER?

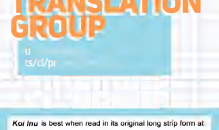
DO YOU STILL REGRET ANYTHING?

GO SEE HER
YOUR CHILDHOOD FRIEND.

EVEN IF IT'S UNLIKELY, MAYBE SHE STILL REMEMBERS YOU AND MAYBE SHE'S WAITING FOR THE DAY YOU TWO REUNITE.
WHATEVER, IT'S UP TO YOU...
LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH EVERY NOW AND THEN.
THANK YOU, YOUSUKE ...

YEP, EVERYTHING TURNED OUT ALRIGHT IN THE END.
I GOT TO BE WITH YOU AGAIN.

GROWL
!
!



to be continued...

THE CAROLUS MENGUS TRANSLATION GROUP

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Koi Inu is best when read in its original long strip form at http://www.bato.to/comic/_/comics/koi-inu-r15434 where this scanlation is originally posted.